Proclamation

A WARNING TO ALL CHRISTIANS

WORLD'S IMPENDING CRISIS — THE CAUSE — DUTY OF CHRISTIANS — THE RESULT

International Bible Students Pass Resolution

I.B.S.A. BOX 427 RALLO, MO

THE Los Angeles *Examiner* of August 27th says: "Thirty thousand people heard Judge Rutherford's lecture on 'Armageddon' yesterday afternoon at the Coliseum." Many thousands more vainly attempted to reach the Coliseum in time for the lecture but were prevented from so doing because of the inadequate transportation facilities. Without doubt it was the greatest religious gathering ever held on the Pacific Coast.

This lecture was the grand finale of the annual convention of the International Bible Students Association held at Los Angeles, August 18-26 inclusive. At the afternoon session of the convention on Saturday Judge Rutherford, President of the Association, delivered a thrilling address on the parable of the Sheep and Goats, particularly emphasizing the fact that in all the denominational churches the Fundamentalists are making a heroic fight for the Bible as God's inspired Word and that it is the duty of the Bible Students to encourage them in contending for the faith once delivered to the saints. At the conclusion of his address he read a resolution, which this great assembly of Christians by a rising vote unanimously adopted. We set out herewith the resolution in full, together with a synopsis of the lectures:

Sheep and Goats

When the followers of Christ Jesus can plainly see prophecy concerning the kingdom in course of fulfilment they have cause for rejoicing. Jesus said that there would be a great falling away from the faith by those who compose the membership in the denominational churches, and that particularly this would be true with reference to the clergy and the "principal ones of the flock." This prophecy is in course of fulfilment. In the denominational churches there is now a great controversy between the Modernists who deny the fall of man, the blood of Jesus Christ as the redemptive price of man, and the coming of the Messianic kingdom, and the Fundamentalists who believe that the Bible is God's Word of Truth, that man was created perfect, that he fell because of sin, that Jesus died to redeem man and will come again.

Those who wholly trust in the Lord should call the attention of all believers to these facts and warn them to take heed to the Scriptures and to come out from amongst the unrighteous systems.—1 Timothy 6:3-5; Revelation 18:4.

Jesus foretold that there would develop in the church denominations two general classes, considered from another viewpoint; one of which He designated under the term of "sheep" and the other under the term "goats." Aptly these two animals portray the characteristics of the two classes named. A goat is stubborn, heady, selfish, proud, covetous, fierce and cruel even to the point of forsaking its own. A sheep is meek, gentle, teachable, manifests a desire to do right and to be led in the right way.

Jesus said that those of the goat class would pretend to be Christians and do great works in His name, but that they would neglect to minister to His brethren, the true saints, and would despise them and cruelly push them aside. To the sheep class He said: 'Ye did these good deeds unto my brethren, therefore I count it as though ye did them unto me.'

The Lord came to His temple in 1918 and shortly thereafter began His judgment upon the nations of "Christendom," made up as they are of the clergy, financial and political classes, who are rulers in the world and in the denominational churches, in which are also many of the sheep class. The Lord points out that this judgment would result in the goat class receiving great punishment similar to that to be ministered unto the devil, whereas the sheep class are to be granted full opportunity for life everlasting. To the goats Jesus says: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels." And unto the sheep class He says: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

The judgment of the Lord is upon all Christendom, and the saints are to participate therein. (Psalm 149:5-9) The time has come for those who believe in God and in the Lord Jesus Christ as man's Redeemer, to separate themselves completely from those organizations and systems whose leaders and rulers deny "the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ," whose blood is the redemptive price of mankind (Jude 4; 1 Peter 1:18, 19; 1 Timothy 2:3-6), and to point them to the warning words of Jesus from heaven, saying, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."—Revelation 18:4.

Resolution

Adopted by International Bible Students Association Convention at Los Angeles, August 25, 1923

WE, the International Bible Students in general convention assembled, again declare our absolute faith in and allegiance to Jehovah God our Father and to His beloved Son Christ Jesus, our Redeemer and King, and our absolute confidence in the Bible as God's inspired Word of Truth given to man for his guidance and instruction in righteousness.

As followers of our Lord who are diligently striving to be His true and faithful witnesses, we deem it our privilege and duty to call the attention of all peace and order loving peoples of all the nations to the deplorable conditions now existing in the world and to point them to Messiah's kingdom as the only remedy for national and individual ills.

We hold and declare that Jesus Christ organized His church in purity to represent Him upon earth; that selfish and ambitious men, loving earthly honor and glory more than the approval of God, have brought in false doctrines destructive of faith in God and His Word, and that as a result there now exist in the various denominational churches two general classes, to wit:

First: Those who pretend to be Christians but do not believe in the Bible as God's inspired Word of Truth, who repudiate the doctrines of the fall of man and his redemption through the blood of Jesus Christ, which class is made up of apostate clergymen and 'the principal of their flocks,' who are worldly men of strong financial and political influence, which class exercises the controlling influence and power in the denominational organizations; and

Second: That great multitude of peoples who claim to be Christians and who hold and believe the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, namely, that the Bible is the Word of God written under inspiration of the Holy Spirit; that the Lord Jesus came into the world to redeem man from sin and death; that He gave His life a ransom for mankind; that He rose from the dead and ascended into heaven and will come again and set up His kingdom, as He promised.

The class first above mentioned are lovers of self, covetous, boasters, unthankful, unholy, fierce, despisers of those who strive to be good, heady, highminded, having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof; and they slander, misrepresent and persecute those who faithfully try to represent our Lord. (2 Timothy 3:1-5; Matthew 24:9; Mark 13:9) While claiming to be representatives of our Lord, they misrepresent Him in this, to wit:

(1) They have forsaken the Word of God, denied the fall of man and denied the Lord Jesus, by whose blood man must be redeemed.—Jude 4.

(2) They have used the name Christian and the Christian religion as a cloak to hide their unrighteousness and to enable them to deceive the people, and have committed spiritual fornication by uniting church with political and financial power.—Jeremiah 2:21-24; Revelation 18:3.

(3) While posing as the representatives of the Prince of Peace, they have sanctified war, openly advised, encouraged and advocated the same, and by appealing to the patriotism of the people have induced them to engage in war; they have wrongfully preached the men into the trenches, caused them to fight and die, have filled the land with a host of widows and orphans, and thereby increased the sorrow and suffering of mankind.—Romans 13:9; Matthew 26:52; Hebrews 12:14; Galatians 6:10; Luke 3:14.

(4) They have with selfish design invaded the schools, colleges, seminaries and universities with their God-dishonoring doctrines of higher criticism and evolution, have led the people into gross error and destroyed the faith of multitudes in the inspired Word of God.—Jeremiah 12:10, 12; 13:13, 14; 5:25, 30; 8:9, 11; 9:8, 9.

(5) They have spurned the true teachings of Jesus and the apostles, have scattered the flock of God and produced a famine in the land for the hearing of the Word of the Lord, and caused the hungry and thirsty to starve for spiritual food.—Amos 8:11; Psalm 107:4, 5; Ezekiel 34:4-6.

(6) They have hated the light and the bearers of the light (Matthew 5:14), refused to give meat to the hungry and drink to the thirsty Christian, turned away the stranger, failed to minister to the sick, persecuted and caused to be imprisoned honest and faithful Christians, resorted to deeds of violence against peaceable and order-loving Christians, and 'on their skirts is found the blood of the souls of poor innocents.'—Jeremiah 2:34; Matthew 25:42, 43.

(7) They have wilfully repudiated and rejected the teachings of Jesus and the apostles concerning the Lord's second coming and the establishment of God's kingdom on earth for the blessing of the people, and have substituted therefor a man-made, Satan-directed league of nations which they hail as the savior of mankind and as the political expression of God's kingdom on earth, thus blaspheming His name and cause. They have taken counsel together against the Lord and His kingdom, which counsel Jehovah declares shall not stand.—Psalm 2:1-12; Isaiah 8:9, 10.

Furthermore, we hold and declare that of those described in the second class there is a multitude of the peace and order loving ones in the denominational churches, both Catholic and Protestant, who have held and yet hold to their faith, who have been kind and considerate with and respected the faith of their fellows regardless of creed or denomination, have fed the hungry and given drink to the thirsty, have taken in the stranger, clothed the naked, visited the sick and ministered to those wrongfully imprisoned, all in the name of our Lord; that these have hope in the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ and its attending blessings; and that for such the Lord has declared His love.—Matthew 25:34-40.

We point to the fact that God through His Word has declared His vengeance against all unrighteousness and particularly against the present evil order (Isaiah 34:1-4, 8); that the Lord Jesus is now invisibly present judging the nations of earth; that the end of the world has come and the dashing to pieces of Satan's empire is in progress (Matthew 24:7-14); and that all who willingly ally themselves with Satan and his organization shall suffer at Jehovah's hand a terrible punishment; that those espousing the righteous cause of the Lord and faithfully serving Him shall pass through the trouble and receive boundless blessings (Zephaniah 2:2, 3; Zechariah 13:8, 9; Psalm 41:1, 2); that the line of demarcation between the two classes of Christendom is clearly drawn and the time has come for the separation of those who prefer evil from those who love righteousness and desire the Lord's kingdom.

We, therefore, in the spirit of love sound the warning to all such peace and order loving and God-fearing ones who are associated with the denominational churches, and point them to the fact that they can have no part in nor fellowship with that class of pretending Christians who repudiate the Word of God and deny the Lord Jesus Christ and His kingdom; and we call upon them to heed the Word of God and separate themselves from the unclean thing (2 Corinthians 6:17), to withdraw themselves from the unrighteous ecclesiastical systems designated by the Lord as Babylon, and to come out from her, lest they be partakers of her sins and receive of her plagues (Revelation 18:4); and

We appeal to all such to recognize that Jesus Christ is King of kings and Lord of lords and that His kingdom now at hand is the hope and salvation of the peoples; and that they individually and collectively declare themselves on the side of the Lord and in sympathy with His cause, and be ready to receive the blessings of God's kingdom, which He has prepared for them from the foundation of the world.

The GOLDEN AGE

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THE WORLD CRISIS — JUDGE RUTHERFORD'S LECTURE

ARMAGEDDON

THE greatest crisis of the ages is upon the nations of earth. It therefore becomes the solemn duty of all Christians to sound the alarm. Concerning this day Jehovah said: "Sound an alarm . . . let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; for the day of the Lord . . . is nigh at hand." (Joel 2:1) It is likewise important to point the people to the divine solution of the world's perplexing problems.

As a result of the World War the nations are bankrupt and the flower of humanity has gone into the grave. Selfishness, fraud, profiteering and hatred are ever on the increase, making the burdens of humanity unbearable. Distrust, perplexity and fear have taken hold upon men in all walks of life. The nations are feverishly preparing for war, and are vying with each other in producing the most devilish and deadly instruments of destruction. Internal disturbances increase daily. The fiery volcano rumbles and roars and ever and anon breaks forth into flame. Many cry, "Peace, peace," when there is no peace. Thoughtful men of the world sense the approaching horrors and speak of them in no uncertain terms. From some we quote: "There is no settlement in Europe. There is no peace in Europe. Governments can do nothing. They are afraid to do anything and they stand by and allow things to go from bad to worse. 1923 is worse than 1914."—Ramsay MacDonald, M. P. "A new chapter opens in the history of Europe and of the world, with a climax of horror such as mankind has never yet witnessed."—Lloyd George. "No man unless he is drunk with optimism can deny that the world is very sick, and it may be a sickness unto death."—Sir Philip Gibbs. "I think it is certain that if there be another such war again civilization will never recover from it."—Viscount Grey.

The Reason

Why, in this period of the world's greatest enlightenment, do we find the people in such distress and perplexity? Jehovah through His prophet answers: "Come near, ye nations, to hear; and hearken, ye people; let the earth hear, and all that is therein; the world, and all things that come forth of it. For the indignation of the Lord is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies. . . . For it is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of the recompences for the controversy of Zion." (Isaiah 34:1, 2, 8) But why God's indignation? Because the old world has ended. Satan's empire has come to its full in wickedness, the time for its fall and the establishment of the Kingdom of Righteousness is here. But how may we know that this is true? The prophets of God foretold the events as we now see them. Jesus had informed His disciples that in due time the old world would end, that He would return and set up the kingdom of God, which would bless the people of earth. With these thoughts in mind the disciples propounded to Jesus the question: "Tell us when shall these things be, and what shall be the sign of thy coming [presence], and of the end of the world?" The answer of Jesus was given in prophetic phrase; that is to say, He foretold what we should expect to transpire at the time implied by the question.

For many years Bible Students have been telling the people that a great change in the world's affairs would begin in 1914. They based their conclusion upon the fact that God overthrew Israel in 606 B. C., that there began the Gentile Times; that through His prophets He indicated that the Gentile dominion should continue without interruption for the period of 2,520 years and then the Lord Jesus, whose right it is, would take unto Himself His power and reign. It is easy to see that this period must end in 1914. We should, therefore, expect at the end of the Gentile Times the old order to begin to pass away. Answering the question propounded to Him, Jesus said: 'The nations will be angry and God's wrath will come.' "Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom"; and this shall be followed by pestilence, famines and revolutions in various parts of the earth, which will mark the beginning of the downfall of the old order. (Matthew 24:7) Exactly on time in 1914 these things began to come to pass, and in regular and progressive order famines, pestilence and revolutions have followed the World War. As further evidences of the time, Jesus declared that God's favor would begin to return to the people of Israel; that there would be a great persecution of Christians; that there would be a great falling away of Christians from the faith once delivered to the saints; that upon earth there would be distress of nations with perplexity; that men's hearts would be failing them for fear because of what they see coming upon organized society.

Prophecies Fulfilled

All of these prophecies of Jesus have been fulfilled. God's favor began to be especially marked toward the Jew in 1918; about the same time there was a great persecution of Christians in Europe and America, which persecution was instigated by apostate clergymen. Now we mark a great falling away from the faith. Modernists, claiming to be Christians, are denying the inspiration of the Scriptures, denying the fall of man, the redemption by our Lord's sacrifice, and the coming of His kingdom. These faith-destroying doctrines have invaded the schools, seminaries, colleges and universities. Another branch of the denominational church is known as Fundamentalists; and these are they who believe that the Bible is God's Word of truth, and that redemption of man comes only through Christ Jesus. While these two factions are fighting between themselves the perplexity of the people increases. Therefore, we see that faith in God's Word is terribly shaken, internal destruction threatens the nations, while all the nations themselves are gathering their forces and preparing for war. Naturally the people ask: "Whither are the nations headed? What shall we expect?" We answer: All the nations are marching to the great battle of Armageddon, and there they shall fall to rise no more as unrighteous nations.

Armageddon Defined

Armageddon means the great and final conflict between right and wrong, truth and error. God foreshadowed this in dealing with Israel. That which transpired with Israel foreshadowed like events to transpire in Christendom on a far greater scale. Armageddon was the great battlefield of Palestine. There Gideon and his little army put to flight the Midianites, who in their distress and excitement destroyed each other. Gideon and his band typified the Christ, while the Midianites pictured the contending hosts of Christendom. Jehovah, through His prophet, foretelling the gathering of the nations to Armageddon, said: "Assemble yourselves and come, all ye nations, and gather yourselves together round about. . . . Let the nations be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat [Valley of Graves]: for there will I sit to judge all the nations round about. . . . The Lord also shall roar out of Zion . . . and the heavens [ecclesiasticism] and the earth [organized society] shall shake: but the Lord will be the hope of his people."—Joel 3:11-16.

Could It Be Averted?

Is there no possible way to avert the battle of Armageddon? Five years ago it was possible; now it is impossible. Jesus gave the clear evidence, which should have been proof conclusive to all pretending Christians, as well as real ones, concerning His second presence, the end of the world and the establishment of His kingdom. Had the clergy and the principal of their flocks taken heed to Jesus' words (Matthew 24:7-14) and told the people the truth; had the profiteers ceased defrauding the people and dealt righteously with them; had the politicians faithfully represented the people, and had all these accepted the testimony of Jesus and yielded to the establishment of His kingdom, the great trouble just ahead would have been averted. (Jeremiah 18:8; 23:19-22; 26:12, 13) Due warning was given; they failed to heed the warning.

Gathering for the Battle

There are three factors assembling the nations to the great battle of Armageddon. In symbolic phrase the Lord described it thus: "And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. . . . And he gathered them together to a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon."—Revelation 16:13-16.

Dragon means the devil's organization arrayed against Christ's kingdom, seeking the destruction of it. (Psalm 2:2, 3) *Beast* symbolically represents selfish world powers wickedly controlled by the influence of Satan, ruling by military or other force. *False prophet* symbolically means religious systems claiming to represent the Lord Jesus on earth, yet denying Him and His power and, in fact, representing the devil. They sanctify war, advocate violence and pronounce a benediction upon the unrighteous ruling factors of the world and claim that the present powers are ruling by divine authority. *Frog* symbolizes a system or organization that is windy, assumes to have great wisdom, makes much noise and boastfully claims the only power and authority to rule. *Unclean spirits* symbolize impure and unrighteous doctrines emanating from these three factors; namely, the dragon, beast, and false prophet. These are doctrines of the devil sent forth for the purpose of deceiving and defrauding the people.

The doctrines or messages of these three evil organizations may be briefly summed up as follows: "Give no heed to the teachings that the kingdom of Christ is at hand; those who advocate such are enemies of the government and should be destroyed. (Psalm 2:3) A great league or world court is the one way to safeguard the rights of the people; the present constituted authorities are ruling by divine right. Therefore let all the people patriotically and religiously support the present order and refuse to yield to the kingdom of Christ. All must support our religious system, which has joined hands with big financiers, profiteers and big politicians. We must sanctify war and prepare for war in times of peace; and all the people must patriotically support war regardless of the cause." While these three thus boastfully claim to know the only way to rule mankind the nations because of fear are madly preparing for war; and thus, as God foretold, they are hastening on to the great battle of Armageddon.

Christ, the antitypical Gideon, is now turning the light on the nations of "Christendom," typified by the Midianites, exposing their unrighteousness. The light of truth is frightening them and they are madly rushing to the great conflict. Sober-minded men of the world see the impending world-battle between the nations. They note the strife between the radical and conservative elements; between capital and labor; between Knights of Columbus and the Ku Klux Klan; that selfishness rules, and in fact every man's hand is against his neighbor and that the world cannot survive the impending crash. Sir John Foster says: "It is enough to make the angels weep that after the greatest tragedy the world has ever known the nations should be showing their teeth more in 1923 than they did in 1913." Mr. Warden of the London *Mail* says: "The next war will last but a few days. With the new air and gas attacks, which have been planned by headquarters staffs, London and Paris will be wiped out in a night."

Describing this conflict Jesus said: "Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved." (Matthew 24:21, 22) His testimony is corroborated by that of the prophets.—Daniel 12:1; Jeremiah 25:32, 33; Psalm 107:25-30; Haggai 2:7.

The Result

This great conflict will be sharp and quick. Satan's empire will fall. The Beast and the False Prophet, including those pretended Christians particularly described by our Lord as "goats," will suffer a like punishment to that which is to be inflicted upon Satan, while the people who pass through the trouble will be symbolically slain, that is to say, brought under subjection to the Lord by the message of truth.—Rev. 19:19-21.

Some Escape

Seeing this trouble rapidly approaching, many will ask: "Is it possible to escape it; and, if so, how?" Jehovah answers thus: "Before the day of the Lord's anger come upon you, seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness; it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger."—Zephaniah 2:2-4.

Righteousness can be had only from the Lord and by those who accept and obey Him. The pretended religionists who deny the Lord openly and repudiate the ransom-sacrifice cannot obtain righteousness so long as they continue in that course. These pretended religious systems have become unclean and the habitation of evil spirits, with which true Christians can have no part nor fellowship. Therefore let all who love Jehovah and the Lord Jesus and believe the Bible as true, heed the words of the Master directed against the unrighteous systems: "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins and that ye receive not of her plagues."—Rev. 18:4.

Divine Remedy

World peace will be established only by the Prince of Peace, whose kingdom is now here. (Isaiah 9:6, 7) The God of heaven is now setting up His kingdom that shall stand forever. (Daniel 2:44) The time has come for truth to triumph. Those who deliberately ally themselves with Satan and his evil organization and fight against the Lord and His kingdom shall suffer destruction. (Matthew 25:41-46) All who willingly ally themselves with the Lord and His kingdom and who obey righteousness shall be granted the blessings of life everlasting.—Zephaniah 3:8, 9; Ezekiel 18:27, 28; John 8:51; 11:26; Acts 3:19-24.

In the name of Christ, the King of kings now present, I call upon all peace- and order-loving people, who have faith in God and in His kingdom, to separate themselves from the wicked systems dominated and controlled by selfish and apostate men and to take their stand firmly upon the Lord's side. Thus doing and becoming obedient to the Lord's will, they may pass through the great time of trouble and be of the millions now living on the earth who will never die, and who will inherit the kingdom which God has prepared for them from the foundation of the world.

The Prince of Peace is now invisibly present. His reign has begun. The government of righteousness shall be upon His shoulder. (Isaiah 9:6, 7) Let all the nations and all the people hear and render allegiance to the King of kings! By Him the world shall be established that it cannot be moved. He shall judge the people righteously. (Psalm 96:10) His kingdom shall endure forever.—Daniel 2:44.

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